(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) No, Sir. The transgenic hybrid mustard developed by M/s. Proagro Seed Company Ltd. for improving the yield contain three genes for three traits; these are (i) bar (glucosinolate ammonium tolerance trait), (ii) barnase (male sterility producing trait), and (iii) barstar (restoration of fertility trait). Based on the recommendation of the Monitoring-cum-Evaluation Committee (MEC) of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM), the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) in its 27th Meeting held on 8th August, 2001 permitted M/s. Proagro Seeds Company Ltd. to conduct large scale open field trials. Subsequently the Company submitted the proposal for approval of the GEAC for commercial release and marketing of transgenic mustard and seed production. The GEAC has not given the approval as yet.

GM Mustard

2423. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:
SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have given approval for genetically modified mustard being marketed in the country;

(b) if so, whether an evaluation has been made of the benefits of higher productivity *vis-a-vis* the risks to health and local varieties;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the insect-resistant Bt. Cotton crop has been found to be successful; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC)

in its 27th Meeting held on 8th August, 2001 permitted M/s. Proagro Seeds Company Ltd. Gurgaon to conduct large scale open field trials only. The company has been involved in the research and development of transgenic hybrids of Indian mustard for improving the yield for the last three years, following Department of Biotechnology guidelines. During the field trials the hybrids have been tested and compared with the non-transgenic hybrid for various parameters. It has been found that the hybrids offered better agronomic performance over the best available varieties in the country. Subsequently, the request of the company to allow for commercial release and marketing of transgenic mustard and seed production was considered by the GEAC in the 34th Meeting held on 7th November, 2002. The GEAC has decided to further examine the data submitted by the company.

(d) and (e) Bt Cotton an insect resistant variety hybrid developed by Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company (MAHYCO) is the first and only transgenic crop approved by the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) for commercial cultivation in India. The GEAC accorded conditional approval for release of three Bt Cotton hybrid varieties namely BT MECH 162, BT MECH 184 and BT MECH 12 into the environment after taking into consideration the reports of large scale field trials on Bt Cotton varieties and recommendations of the Monitoring Evaluation Committee constituted by the Department of Biotechnology and Indian Council for Agricultural Research and Biosafety evaluation. Some of the fields where these hybrid varieties are being cultivation have recently been monitored by a Committee constituted by this Ministry. The Committee found the performance of Bt. Cotton satisfactory in terms of higher number of bolls, reduced number of sprays for control of bollworms and higher yields in the cotton harvested so far.

Refusal for Genetically Modified Mustard

2424. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:
SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Genetic Engineering Approval Committee has refused to give its nod for Genetically Modified Mustard; and